Abstract of the Invention

An adaptive pen mode selection is included within a pen input based computing system. The adaptive pen mode selection automatically switches the operating mode from an input data mode to the data item selection mode when a pen stroke is made over an existing data item to permit it to be selected for editing, deletion and replacement. The adaptive pen mode selection provides an improved user interface returns the computer to the user specified operating mode when the selection operation has been completed to allow the user to continue entering data in the user specified operating mode. With adaptive pen mode selection, a user of a pen input based computing system does not need to change the operating mode of the computer to an data item selection mode using the control inputs in order to select one or more data items for editing.